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TO : Department of State

755.11/7-2750 BU. INDEX

FROM : The Hague No. 183 July 27, 1950 XR 956.61

ACTION FOR

REF : Emb. Des. No. 151 of July 25, 1950

INFO DCR OLI IE

SUBJECT : ADDITIONAL PRESS COMMENT ON RETURN OF KING LEOPOLD TO BELGIUM

Three newspapers (in addition to those previously reported in Embassy's Despatch 151) offer editorial comment on the return of King Leopold to Belgium. Two of these are Catholic and the other Socialist, and their views follow the respective party lines.

Catholic HET BINNENHOF warmly welcomes the King on his return and observes that the Socialists have created a dangerous precedent in refusing to accept the decision of the parliamentary majority. It recognizes that the Socialist leaders have suffered a serious loss of prestige, but reminds them that they have only themselves to blame. Finally, it predicts that, despite the present sound and fury, the Belgian Socialists will not permit themselves to lose their heads.

Conservative Catholic DE MAASBODE cannot understand why the King did not return to Belgium immediately after the liberation, thereby avoiding the long controversy. It feels that if he had done so at that time, there would have been no doubt of his acceptance by all the Belgians. After all that has happened, the paper can only express the hope that Belgium returns to normalcy as soon as possible, in order to play its proper role in achieving European unity.

Socialist HET VRIJE VOLK's reaction can hardly be described as sanguine. "What we feared has happened", it begins. "The Catholics have smuggled the King into the Royal Palace and the dangerous period is about to begin". The paper goes on to denounce the King as a living symbol of Nazi collaboration, to declare that "for Brussels and the Walloons, the Monarch is finished", and to predict that the value of the Belgian Army will now be reduced to nothing. "If he has any sense", the paper concludes venemously, "he will abdicate in favor of his son; if he refuses, it is not impossible that a revolutionary movement will sweep him from the throne".

mle 755.11/7-2750

For the Ambassador:
William T. Nunley
Attache of Embassy

AUG 1 1950

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